

NOTES FOR REMARKS BY IVAN L. HEAD,
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"THE ISSUE IS SURVIVAL"

Facts are elusive. Whether they be pursued in a scientific laboratory, in a court of justice, or in the columns of a newspaper. Still more are they elusive in the political arena.

In each of these environments, for every hypothesis there is, and should be, one or more counter propositions. It is a reflection of the human condition, however, that neither hypothesis nor proposition always springs forth from wholesome circumstance. The insidious involvement of suspicion, greed, intolerance, and prejudice combine to make the search for truth, and identification of fact, constantly difficult and on occasion perilous. In the result, the truth remains hidden. Sometimes for unconscionable periods of time. Sometimes with incalculable costs.

To scientists, the most infamous example is that of Galileo. To lawyers, it is that of the prosecution of Sir Walter Raleigh by Sir Edward Coke. In the worlds of politics and journalism, historians may in future determine that one of the most glaring incidents is that of the present refusal to accept as factual the relationship between countries developed and developing. Can this refusal be likened to the treatment of

Galileo? Perhaps not. Yet the inclination of some political leaders to weigh international relationships in simple terms, arrayed most often on an East-West axis, measured constantly on a scale of friendship and ideology, makes the analogy a tempting one. What was the climate in which Galileo found himself?

Writes Bronowski:

"In 1622 Rome created the institution for the propagation of the faith from which we still derive the word propaganda. Catholics and Protestants were embattled in what we should now call a cold war, in which, if Galileo had only known it, no quarter was given to a great man or small. The judgement was very simple on both sides: whoever is not for us is - a heretic."

The denial by the Catholic church for 200 years of the true nature of the solar system did not cause the earth or the other planets to pause for one second in their revolutions about the sun. The denial did, however, suffocate scientific enquiry in the vast realm of Catholicism for two centuries, and gave an opportunity to the protestant nations to gain a predominant position in scientific endeavours. Bronowski again:

"The effect of the trial and of the imprisonment (of Galileo) was to put a total stop to the scientific tradition in the Mediterranean. From now on the Scientific Revolution moved to Northern Europe. Galileo died, still a prisoner in his house, in 1642. On Christmas Day of the same year, in England, Isaac Newton was born."

Three hundred and forty years following the death of Galileo, the hypothesis denied by all too many leaders of the industrialized countries has nothing to do with Copernican theory. It pertains very much, however, to another form of revolution, one without astronomical meaning but one which is as potentially capable of causing fundamental and far-reaching change as was the scholarship of Copernicus and its defence by Galileo. It is the dependence of the nations of the North - in economic terms, in environmental terms, in military terms, and in political terms - on the nations of the South. The extent of dependency varies from country to country and from sector to sector, yet dependency there is. To ignore it, or to deny its existence, changes nothing but the quality of the protestor. It

reduces, moreover, the likelihood that corrective action can be taken in time to avoid major calamity.

The Catholic church survived its lengthy blindness toward the solar system; one cannot be certain that the industrialized nations can survive their apparent blindness toward the international economic system.

It is understandable that in the mighty industrialized countries, and particularly in this mightiest of all countries, there is resistance to the concept of dependance on others; unwillingness to accept that a nation's fate or health or freedom of movement is held hostage beyond its shores. Yet one need look no further than the front pages of today's newspapers to realize that this is so. When last did the nations of the North, individually or in unison, undertake successfully a major foreign policy initiative that was not a reaction to events elsewhere, most often in the South, sometimes in the East?

Notwithstanding this pattern of reaction, the nations of the North appear incapable of proposing changes in global relationships which would at once acknowledge that dependence -

or, better, interdependence - and as well move toward easing the structural inequities which, unattended, guarantee an ever worsening sequence of events. Not at Cancun, described by Prime Minister Trudeau, one of the two co-chairmen, as less than successful; not at the earlier Western Economic Summit in Ottawa where the term Global Negotiations met such opposition from some that it could only be retained in the communique by spelling the words in lower case letters.

What is the evidence of dependence that northern leaders choose to reject? Of what quality? From what source? The Brandt Commission, speaking of North-South relations as was its mandate, concluded "At the beginnings of the 1980s the world community faces much greater dangers than at any time since the Second World War." The Global 2000 Report warned that unless steps are taken to reduce world-wide pressures on cropland, pastures, forests, mineral and water resources, the world will become even "more crowded, more polluted, less ecologically stable and more vulnerable to disruption than the world we live in now." The Brandt Commission was even more sombre on these points:

"A number of poor countries are threatened with the irreversible destruction of their ecological systems; many face growing food deficits and possibly mass starvation. In the international economy there is the possibility of competitive trade restrictions or devaluations; a collapse of credit with defaults by major debtors, or bank failures; a deepening recession under possible energy shortages or further failures of international cooperation; an intensified struggle for spheres of interest and influence, or for control over resources, heading to military conflicts. The 1980s could witness even greater catastrophes than the 1930s."

Of dependence, the illustrations are manifest. World Bank figures reveal that in 1979, 43 per cent of Japanese merchandise exports were sold in the non-oil exporting developing countries; 36 per cent of United States merchandise exports that year went to the same markets, as did 32 per cent of Australian merchandise exports. In United States terms, this means that one American worker out of twenty is employed producing exports for the Third

World. LDC imports of merchandise from the industrialized countries in the 1970s grew at a pace more than 50 per cent faster than merchandise trade among the industrialized countries.

So important are third world markets that the European Economic Community as well as the United States sends more than one-third of all exports to the developing countries. In comparative terms this means that the United States exports twice as much to the developing countries as to the EEC; the EEC three times as much to the developing countries as to the United States.

Even these figures do not reveal the comparative trade advantage enjoyed by OECD countries. A recent report to the Trilateral Commission reveals that Japan's export-import ratio in trade of manufactured goods with the South was 7 to 1 in 1979, that of Europe 4 to 1, and North America 2 to 1. This overwhelming advantage in value-added goods explains why, between 1973 and 1977, exports to the South created 5 million new jobs in OECD countries.

Agricultural products are part of this export trade as well, and in immense quantities. FAO statistics reveal that developing countries imported food in 1979 to the value of US\$38 billion, most of it from the industrialized North.

To sustain this purchasing pattern, or to improve it, the developing countries must have the means to pay. It is to ensure such means that they seek reforms in the international trading system and seek some voice in the international financial institutions. Reforms that are blocked by the industrialized countries on the grounds that their own stagnant economies must first be put in order. Yet such blockage refuses to accept that economies North and South are trapped inexorably in the turbulence of the post-Keynesian period. If either is to emerge, it must be in cooperation with the other.

And so emerge the self-contradictory communiques from summits and from capitals: admission of inability to deal effectively with domestic economic crisis, exasperation at continued political instability in so many regions, yet refusal to acknowledge the need for multilateral solutions.

Observed the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Mr. Sonny Ramphal:

"It has been easier to agree upon the growing interdependence of the world economy than to face up to its implications; easier to acknowledge that the recession is worldwide than to accept worldwide solutions; easier to recognize a global crisis than to accommodate the need for global approaches to its resolution."

At a time when international cooperation has never been more demonstrably necessary, the preferred instrument of foreign policy is seemingly becoming the unilateral threat. The more obvious the failures, the more ominous become the threats.

In the absence of acceptance of responsibility, circumstances become ever more sombre:

- of the slightly more than 150 countries in the international community, some 100 are now in food deficit positions;

- at present rates of destruction, the world's forest cover will have been halved by the year 2000;
- by that same year 2000, the population of this planet will be 2 billion larger - the equivalent of one new Bangladesh every year for the next 20 years.

These three categories of human activity intersect again and again. The global carrying capacity is sorely tested by excessive population increases with unsustainable demands upon forests for fuelwood and upon arable land for agricultural production. The rapid depletion of forest cover threatens incalculable future effects on the carbon dioxide balance in the atmosphere and likely wide-ranging changes in weather patterns. The disappearance of forest cover leads to soil drifting and erosion, to unwanted silting of rivers, of soil build-up behind power dams and the blockage of harbours.

Yet, for the most part, northern leaders and communicators refuse to turn their attention from domestic-economic or

eastern-sourced security issues. Far from facing the basic issues, these governments encourage southern countries to believe that their main problem is Communism, and invite them to mortgage their futures to purchase arms. The United States is now far and away the largest exporter of arms to the Third World, responsible for 45 per cent of all sales. The second largest exporter, the Soviet Union, trails with 27.5 per cent of the total. What contribution does this activity make to the sought after goal of stability? Premier George Price of Belize replies:

"... the only issue that counts in Central America is the North-South Dialogue. If you don't bring stability and justice to the markets in sugar and coffee, you will never have stability and justice in the countries that produce them."

We know from history that if a powerful institution has committed itself to the proposal that the earth is the centre of the universe, and that around it revolves the sun and the moon and the stars, then the institution will not readily abandon that commitment once it has endowed it with Christian authority, even though the source of the proposal was a heathen Greco-Egyptian.

We should also be aware that if powerful governments have convinced themselves, and with the unwitting support of uninterested journalists convinced their citizenry, that developing countries represent little more than objects of charity, are to be regarded as moons in orbit about the mighty planets, immense pressures must be brought to bear to change that article of faith. Failing that, the consequences could be disastrous. How disastrous? President Mitterand of France has said: "I am convinced that the balance between the two parts of the world, the industrialized nations and the others, will be one of the causes of the most serious tragedies at the end of the century, to be explicit, of world war."

From all sides evidence is accumulating of northern dependency upon the South. Far from the South absorbing infinite quantities of northern largesse, distributed on generous concessional terms, it is the North that is the net beneficiary of North-South money flows. In 1976, the industrialized countries enjoyed a US\$70 billion favourable balance of trade with the developing countries. Seventy billion dollars of advantage to the North. A sum $3\frac{1}{2}$ times the total flow of development assistance in the reverse direction. This immense flow of funds

from South to North has been made possible only by credits from international financial institutions and private banks, by dexterously re-cycling petro-dollars. This pattern cannot continue indefinitely, indeed is not continuing. The exposure of northern banks to massive southern debt is a matter of serious concern. Yet the traditional reticence of bankers to discuss issues in public, the dogma of governments, and the indifference of the press have combined to deny to citizens of northern countries the seriousness of these events. Those latter institutions are comfortable with their catechisms and understandably unwilling to acknowledge voluntarily that their world is not independent and omnipotent, may no longer even be secure as the stable economic centre of this planet.

Some observers of today's scene have drawn the parallel between this and the last century. Today, international relations between North and South are not dissimilar from owner-worker relations a century or so ago. In the pre-union period, prior to the Reform Bills in the British Parliament, workers played no part in either the economic or political structures. If there was work, they were hired. If none, they

were laid off and became dependent upon charity. It was unthinkable, said the privileged, that the franchise could be extended to irresponsible persons who owned no land, who had not been educated. Workers cannot dictate the terms of their employment, said entrepreneurs; if they are not satisfied with their wages, they need not work. Prime Minister Disraeli had a response to the first argument. Mr. Justice Brandeis had a response to the second.

Nevertheless, many decades later, the privileged North looks upon the South in a fashion that all of us would find appalling were we to apply it to our own domestic situations. The suggestion that the developing countries be given some responsibility for the direction of the World Bank or the IMF, that an energy affiliate be created at the Bank, that terms of trade be altered so as to remove the built-in northern advantage - all these suggestions are rejected by the students of the Ptolemaic school. The advocates of change are paid no heed, as if they were dissident agents of a competing religion. The question is a valid one: are those advocates worthy of attention? Who are they, so that we might weigh their credibility? One is the Prime Minister of Canada, Pierre Elliott Trudeau. In 1975, in a

setting dedicated to East-West issues - the European Security Conference in Helsinki - he spoke to the plenary session:

"At some moments in the course of negotiations the difficulties appeared so overwhelming and the progress so slow that we may have had reason to believe we carried on our shoulders the weight of the entire world. In a sense we did, for history has shown us that all too often strife and disagreement in Europe have spread rapidly to affect all other areas. Yet in another sense such a belief is arrogant. Europe is not the world. Nor are many of our concerns, vital though they may be, the concerns of others. Whatever stability this conference anticipates in Europe will be shortlived if we do not seize the opportunity now offered to us to create elsewhere the conditions necessary to permit the economies of tropical countries to be improved, stabilized and made sufficient, to ensure that rural development is encouraged and food production is increased, to provide hope for a better future to the hundreds of millions of people outside of Europe now existing at the subsistence level."

That plea fell on deaf ears. Thus came the Brandt Commission, quoted earlier. What of the credibility of those persons? The Chairman, of course, was formerly Chancellor of West Germany. Three others are former Prime Ministers or Presidents - of Britain, Sweden and Chile. Several have been cabinet ministers - in Indonesia, Tanzania, the United States and elsewhere. One was a past President of the Canadian Labour Congress.

Not Galileos necessarily, but certainly persons worthy of a hearing.

Nor did these persons, distinguished as they are, rely only on their own observations. They sought out the views of many others and distilled this stream of informed opinion into their findings. Those consulted included heads of government - the Chancellor of Austria; the Prime Ministers of Japan, Spain, China, Australia and several other countries; the Presidents of Egypt, Brazil and the Soviet Union, among others. The Commission consulted as well with a host of such distinguished international figures as Barbara Ward, Maurice Strong, Crown Prince Hassan, Henry Kissinger, and Pope Paul VI.

The result is an extraordinary and possibly unprecedented body of knowledge. A report by a Commission whose membership and sources of wisdom are not to be dismissed or ignored. Yet ignored it has been. Ignored on this continent almost totally by the media notwithstanding that one member of the Commission was Katherine Graham.

It was from the Brandt Commission, of course, that I borrowed my title. That body described the North-South dimension in terms of survival; survival at either end of the spectrum.

Survival. Yet outside this hotel 9 out of 10 persons on the street will respond to a question about North-South in bewilderment. Discount air fares to Florida might be their most immediate thought association.

Even at the risk of non-survival, the great communications agencies of North America have abdicated entirely their responsibility to educate Americans and Canadians about their place in this world, to prepare them for the changes that are absolutely necessary if we are to retain any segment of control over the design of our futures.

The North-South dialogue is very much more than a simple question of transfer of resources. Its bottom line is a sharing of power and a sharing of responsibility among the countries of the world. When the South speaks in terms of a new international economic order, it asks that the international system be one that is not tilted permanently against it in terms of commodity prices, access to credit, flows of technology, and the control of markets and decisions, the majority of which are determined in the North. When we speak to the South about raising itself with its own boot-straps, we must be very sure that we are not standing on those boot-straps.

With or without our awareness, the world around us is changing at a breathtaking pace. We in the North may participate in and influence those changes, or we can default and pretend we can get along without the world, as if a North American or European ghetto were either possible or desirable. The first option leads to survival; the second guarantees disaster.

Development in the South is an imperative for a future that works: - an economic imperative because of the interdependence

of our economies; - an ecological imperative because of the singleness of our biosphere; - a political imperative because of the tinder box nature of international disputes. But it is more. Pope John Paul II argued in a speech in Tokyo that "the building of a more just humanity or a more united international community is not just a dream or a vain ideal. It is a moral imperative."

I have referred throughout to facts. Perhaps I have erred in doing so, for facts are not always digestible. Their very number leads to confusion. Their complexity is anathema to the media. Writing last week in The New York Times, Professor William McNeill of the University of Chicago argued that historians should rely instead on myth. "Pre-occupation with detail", he wrote, has prevented historians "from thinking seriously about the world in which we, as 20th century humans, find ourselves."

"The American (and world) public badly need new visions", he wrote, "new generalizations, new myths, global in scope, to help us navigate in our tightly interactive world. If historians fail to advance suitably bold hypotheses and interpretations, then politicians, journalists, and other public figures will continue,

as now, to use unexamined cliches to simplify the choices that must be made."

One great man - a historian, a scientist, a humanist - Jacob Bronowski - addressed himself to this broad canvas. "The ascent of man", he wrote, "is always teetering in the balance. There is always a sense of uncertainty, whether when man lifts his foot for the next step it is really going to come down pointed ahead."

It is the obligation of all of us who make some claim to scientific method and to orderly thought processes to ensure that our futures are moulded by the Galileos and not by their opponents. Today's world does not promise the reprieve of tomorrow's Newton.